لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

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# THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

August 1966

EDITORS

S. D. AHMAD M. G. AHMAD

# THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born in 1835 in Qadian, a village in India. In the eighties of the 19th century, he was called to the office of world Reformer to combat the current of anti-religious philosophies and to explode the Christian theory of redemption based on the fiction of Christ's death on the Cross and to tell the Christians and Muslims to call off their hope for a second visit from Christ as he had been gathered to his forefathers and barred like all mortals from coming back to the world; and that he, the Promised Messiah, had come instead.

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The Promised Messiah initiated the Ahmadiyya Movement (1) to revive Faith in God, challenging rival churches to a spiritual contest to seek Divine sanction for the religion He favoured, through prayer and appeal to Him for guidance and arbitration in the matter, by means of His signs (2) to re-establish the glory of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and to expound and disseminate spiritual beauties and moral excellencies of the teachings of the Holy Quran (3) to wean men from war-like tendencies and to educate world opinion in favour of renunciation of war as a means of settling disputes (4) to infuse hope, faith and courage in the drooping hearts of Muslims and all the depressed races and nations of the world (5) to warn the exploiters, slave-drivers, and pedlars in sin against the evil consequences of their evil ways (6) to collect under one banner all the true followers of Islam and lovers of peace and (7) to inculcate among them the spirit of tolerance, goodwill and self-less fellow-service and a feeling of true brotherhood.

The Promised Messiah passed away in 1908 and was succeeded by his foremost votary and closest companion Hazrat Haji Hakim Maulvi Nooruddin as Khalifatul Masih I. After his death in 1914, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Haji Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad was chosen as the Khalifatul Masih II. During his 52 years of Imamat the Khalifatul Masih II organized a world-girdling chain of mosques and missions. On his death on November 8, 1965, the electoral college named with one accord Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad, the late Khalifatul Masih's son and the Promised Messiah's grandson, the Khalifatul Masih III.

For further information about the Movement, its activities and aims and objectives or literature, enquiries may be addressed to the nearest Ahmadiyya Mission or direct to

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# The Review of Religions

## A Monthly Magazine Devoted to the Cause of Islam

This is an organ of the Ahmadiyya Movement which represents true Islam. It deals with religious, ethical, social and economic questions, Islamic mysticism and current topics. It also provides Book Reviews.

It is open to all for discussing problems connected with the religious and spiritual growth of man, but it does not give any assurance to publish all articles, nor does it accept any responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

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## CONTENTS


| | | Pages |
|---|---|---|
| 1. A Great Challenge Indeed ! ... | | 261 |
| 2. The Truth About Khatm-e-Nabuvvat V ... | | 270 |
| *The Late Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad M.A.* | | |
| 3. God in the Holy Quran ... | | 285 |
| *Mirza Rafi Ahmad* | | |
| 4. Heavenly Light ... | | 291 |
| *Bashir Ahmad Orchard* | | |


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# The Review of Religions

RABWAH, WEST PAKISTAN.

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## A Great Challenge Indeed!

The very first issue of *The Beacon* a magazine of the "Diocese of Gambia and the Rio Pongas" issued from Bathurst, while discussing the activities of the Christian missionaries, laments :

"Islam is our biggest obstacle, and that presumably means our biggest challenge. I feel that the greatest thing we could do for Christ in this diocese, with our meagre strength and slender resources, is to evolve a new and effective technique for work amongst Muslims. Obviously conventional methods get nowhere at all. In this connection I am in communication with the Islam in Africa Project Committee in Nigeria for advice. Dr. W. A. Bijlefeld, Pierre Benignus Study Centre, P. O. Box 4045, Ibadan. TheCommittee is sending Revd. John Crossley in December. In most Muslim countries people find a great gulf fixed between the Christian Church and the Muslim community which they simply cannot bridge. I think we have already learnt quite a lot in this diocese about what methods are a waste of time, and what methods (even though unfortunately extremely expensive)

are effective. I believe we will learn a lot more as time goes on. We have got to evolve a method of presenting the Christian faith to them as something wholly relevant to their present situation that was what we tried to do during LENT, not to an alien situation which we feel they should adopt. Obviously it must be done for Africans by Africans. Islam is not indigenous to west Africa, and in point of fact the form it has adopted here is in many ways unorthodox. Christianity on the other hand seems to have been so terribly rigid. The Church came to Africa from overseas, certainly, but it must cease to be foreign and become entirely African. It is a thing that Europeans cannot really do. They can struggle to make the faith as they know it become indigenous to Africa, but you can't make an old man into a baby by feeding him on milk. The African people have got to produce an African Church, and those in authority must not be worried if it involves some extraordinary things. One must watch doctrine to see that it remains Christian, but one must not tie it down to a Western form of expressing itself, as far as worship is concerned."

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This is not a lone voice. Earlier, we find in *The Daily Times* of Nigeria (Jan. 22, 1958) :

"This view is, however, widely held among Christians who, in the last few years and particularly the last few months, have become increasingly concerned about the success of Islam in southern Nigeria".

Again, we read in *The West African Pilot* (May 21, 1957) :

"A solution must be found to the empty pews on Sundays. If the warning is not heeded, Islam may march triumphantly to the southern most end of Nigeria".

Turning back the pages of history we see a different picture.

Dr. John Henry Barrows in one of his lectures surveyed the situation thus :

"In the partition of Africa, out of total area of eleven and a half million square miles, only one million and a half has been left unappropriated, and this gigantic division leaves Turkey as the only non-Christian state in the Dark Continent. Mohammadanism as it exists in Constantinople and in Africa is not in full sympathy with our humanitarian century. With only one powerful Moslem monarch left in the world, and that ruler permitted to remain in Europe only through the jealousies of Russia and England, Islam is not in the least likely to conquer all mankind."[1]

Mr. Lyndon P. Harries writes in his book *Islam in East Africa :*

"At the beginning of the present century Christian writers were asserting that Islam is nothing without politicl power, and that for this reason Islam in Africa could not survive. No one can seriously believe this now. The challenge remains, and indeed is more formidable because of the cross currents of political life".

Again, John Henry Barrows says :

"I might sketch the Musalman lands, which hast touched with the radiance of the Cross, the Lebannon and the Persian mountains as well as the waters of the Bosphorus, and which is the sure harbinger of the day when Cairo and Damascus and Teheran shall be the servants of Jesus, and when even the solitudes of Arabia shall be pierced, and Christ, in the person of His disciples, shall enter the Kaaba of Mecca and the whole truth shall at last be there spoken. This is eternal life that they might know Thee, the only true God, Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent".

Clearly the tide has turned against Christianity during the last fifty years or so. The big question is why ? Why is it that Christianity with all the power, wealth and resources of the big

1. Barrows lectures 1896-97 by John Heary Barrows, D.D. Madras, 1897.

Western nations is unable to hold against the onslaught of Islam. In our judgement the reasons are not political, economical or other similar ones. The real reason lies deep in the fundamentals of the two religions. Christianity, as against Islam, is not founded on sure and firm ground. Deep down, we find human mind in harmony with the basic principles of Islam ; while Christianity strikes a jarring note.

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We are sure that Christianity is fighting a losing battle against Islam. The future religion of Africa, and indeed of the whole world, will be Islam, not Christianity. Let us analyse and find out why it is so.

*Firstly*, Islam is a living religion. It claims that the Creator of this universe is a Living God and that He reveals Himself to His creatures in this age as He did in the past. This claim can be tested in two ways: through the evidence of history and by personal experience. Packed in the pages of Islamic history we find hundreds of thousands of men who through following the Holy Prophet of Islam and the guidance of the Holy Quran have attained to such spiritual elevation and nearness to God that they were blessed with revelations from the Almighty. They were granted, so to say, an audience with God. They did ultimately enjoy the fruits of their hard labour and negation of their self ; and achieved long-cherished goal of having communion with God. Islam does not merely base itself upon the testimony of people long past, but invites everybody to a direct personal experience of communication with God. To be sure, all doors are shut except the door of Islam. This is the fundamental criterion of its truth as a religion. It establishes a sure and close relationship between man and his Maker. This indeed is the real challenge of Islam. Let anyone professing any other religion and claiming to have personal experience come forward and prove so.

*Secondly*, Islam is the only religion that does not compel its followers to accept merely on authority all those matters the sum total of which is called religion. It furnishes convincing

arguments in support of its doctrines. The existence of God, the nature of His attributes, angels, prayer and its effects, Divine decrees and their sphere, worship and its need ; Divine Law and its benefits, revelation and its importance, resurrection and life after death, heaven and hell—are some of the basic religious problems about which Islam gives detailed explanation and establishes their truth with strong arguments to the satisfaction of the human mind. Islam, not only furnishes its followers with faith but also with certainty of knowledge which satisfies human intellect. All this is sadly lacking in the teachings of the New Testament.

*Thirdly*, Islam satisfies the human intellect. It teaches us that there is no conflict between the word of God and the work of God. It resolves the supposed conflict between science and religion. It does not ask us to ignore the laws of nature and reject what we establish through positive scientific observations and calculations. On the contrary it exhorts its followers to study the laws of nature and derive benefits from them. Galileo Galilei would not have suffered indignities if he had been born in an Islamic country.

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*Fourthly*, Islam satisfies the humanity of human beings. As against so many other religions, particularly Christianity, it does not seek to crush the natural human desires. Nor does it leave them unrestrained and uncontrolled thereby reducing them to animals. Like an expert engineer, who harnesses uncontrolled waters into channels, Islam converts the natural desires, the great human passions, through proper control and guidance into high moral qualities. In Islam sex is not a taboo. It does not forbid us to select life companions. Nor does it kill our gustatory desires. Having endowed us with the faculty of appreciating good food, it does not frown upon eating it.

Does Christianity offer the human race something like this that would satisfy the humanity of the human beings?

*Fifthly*, Islam not only guides the individual but also offers proper guidance for human society as a whole. It teaches us not

only to discharge our duties towards ourselves but also lays great stress upon dealing fairly with others. It lays down instructions for the behaviour of every participant of the human society——may he be father or son; husband or wife ; the ruler or the ruled; the employer or the employee; the rich or the poor; the able-bodied or the disabled.

*Sixthly*, Islam not only regulates the internal life of a nation but also lays down instructions in the international sphere also. The world would be a happier place to live in, if the guidance offered by Islam were adopted as the international code of behaviour among nations. The cold war would be over in no time. Islam provides conditions of peace and comfort for those who wish to tread the path prescribed by it, whoever they may be, wherever they may be. Islam teaches that no nation or state, however strong, should transgress the rights of other nations and states, small or weak. It forbids states and individuals from conspiring against other nations or individuals. It expects nations, states and individuals to co-operate with one another to promote interests of the whole of humanity. It teaches restraint from aggression and co-operation for the advancement of the under-developed.

The United Nations Organization would certainly become more effective if it was based on the guidance offered by Islam in the international sphere.

*Seventhly*, Islam in the life of the Holy Prophet of Islam offers us a perfect exemplar. Man learns by example. Isolated societies may have a separate leader or a guide of their own. But the world, as it stands now——a well-knit unit, needs a guide who would be acceptable to all societies and nations. It is necessary that the Guide who is to lead the entire world should be a model in all conceivable aspects of human relationship and thought, so that there may evolve a common pattern of harmony and unity unassailed by centrifugal forces. Searching carefully down the list of all the possible candidates right from Adam, we come across a number of possible names. The four Rishis of the Hindus; Moses of the Old Testament ; Confucious, the wise man of China; Zoroaster of Persia; Buddha,

the enlightened one of India and Jesus of Nazareth. But none of them even claimed to be such a Model. The only one who claimed to be so, and rightfully so, is the Holy Prophet of Islam. The Holy Quran says :

ولكم فى رسول الله أسوة حسنة

"Verily you have in the Prophet of Allah an excellent model." (33 : 22)

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It is a necessary corollary to this claim that such a man should have faced all such situations which people usually face, for, if there is a situation he has not come across, he cannot be a model for those who are placed in such a situation.

In this short note it is impossible to offer a detailed comparison of the lives of all the sages with the life of the Holy Prophet of Islam. But let us take the case of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Prophet of Islam offers complete guidance, among others, in the following phases of life. He is a model for:

orphans,
children,
the young and the old,
the single and the married,
parents,
kinsmen,
friends,
neighbours,
the poor and the rich, the haves and the have-nots,
the employed and the employer,
the master and the servant,
the citizens,
the rulers and the ruled,
generals and warriors, both in victory and in defeat,
saints,
reformers.

He lived Islam and the Holy Quran. We have only to copy his example. We claim that the Holy Prophet of Islam was the only person who passed through all these and many more phases of life that he alone can be taken up as a perfect model for the whole world.

He alone is the perfect guide.

Let us examine the life history of Jesus Christ. He never led a full blooded life; or so the Gospels tell us. For instance, he was poor all his life and could not thus be a model for the rich. He was always a subject and never a ruler. Hence he cannot serve as a guide for those who run the affairs of the state. The newly independent states of Africa must find him wanting. Again, he never had the occasion to go to war—the only war was a swipe with a sword by one of his disciples at the time of his arrest and the only bloodshed was the cutting of an ear. Surely, this cannot serve as example for the fighter, the victor and the vanquished. Also, he led a life of celibacy and was surely a model for the unmarried to lead a chaste life. But he could not be a model for those who marry and raise families. In him we find no guidance as to how to treat one's spouse, or to rear one's children, or to bear their loss. An old man losing his children can only unsuccessfully search for solace in the life of Jesus Christ.

Jesus did not enter into any business or trade nor did he seek any employment. Indeed he was a *dervish* and could only be a model for those who want to live as hermits; but not for the traders or the employees or the employers. He was oppressed, imprisoned and crucified. He could be a model for those who taste such calamities, for indeed he acquitted himself admirably well in adversity. But never once, in all his life, did he have his foes under his control. We do not know how to carry ourselves about in victory and triumph, to forgive the vanquished or to destroy them completely.

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The Jesus Christ of the Gospels was not a model even for the old. He died at the young age of 33. The New Testament does not tell us of any of his sicknesses from which he suffered. He had no neighbours to deal with. Nor did he have any orphans or widows under his tutelage. He cannot, therefore, be a model for good-neighbourliness or for the way orphans and widows are to be treated.

From this analysis it is clear that Jesus Christ cannot be an

acceptable model in the present-day world when complexities of life have grown infinitely.

Let us now turn to the Holy Prophet of Islam. There is not a single item in our list which does not find comprehensive treatment in his life history. In fact there is such a big list of his noble deeds and achievements that one is only wonderstruck. It surely is a marvel—and all crammed up in ten short years of his life.

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The Holy Prophet of Islam, on whom be peace and blessings of Allah, is a man apart. He indeed is the perfect exemplar. He is no mythical creation. He is the living prophet in more than one sense. He lived and practised what he wants us to live for and practise.

With a Living God, a Living Prophet and a living inviolate Book and a simple message which cuts across the limitations of race, colour and climate, it is no wonder that Islam should pose a challenge to Christianity. To us Islam is the truth and truth has no frontiers. By accepting Islam one accepts all religions in their pristine purity. Other religions are half truth half interpolation. The parochial, the local and the temporary has been replaced by the universal and the everlasting. Islam is the religion of the age of reason, of freedom and of international rights and duties. If man wants to survive on this planet he will have to accept and practise it. Now, is it so amazing that Islam, and not Christianity should be the choice of the Africans?

The time has come for the final battle between right and wrong, true religion and the false ones. We are positive that Islam shall come out victorious as predicted by the Holy Quran.

Islam is a great challenge, indeed !

# The Truth About Khatm-e-Nabuvvat V

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## AN EXAMINATION OF NEGATIVE TRADITIONS

*The Late Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad M.A.*

*Eng. N.R.A.G. Soofi*

In respect of the tradition under discussion, we, in fact, need hardly have to say anything on our own. For, our Holy Master the Prophet has proferred an explanation which should stand as the last word. The tradition containing the words, انی آخر الانبیاء appears in its fullest and completest context in the Sahih Muslim. According to the Sahih Muslim version, the Holy Prophet is stated to have said انی آخر الانبیاء ومسجدی هذا آخر المساجد "I am the last Prophet and my this mosque is the last mosque".

May the blessings of Allah be on the Prophet a thousand-fold, verily he has placed for our guidance, a candle of light in every dark nook and saved us from pitfalls by leading us safely along a clear path. Now this very tradition انی آخر الانبیاء (I am the last prophet) was such as could lead hasty and short-sighted persons to the erroneous interpretation that there could be no prophet of whatever category after him whether from among his servants and devotees and one with him in spirit. Against this one possible miscontruction the Holy Prophet placed a bright candle of warning pointing out to his followers so to say in so many words. "Here انی آخر الانبیاء means that 'I am the last prophet in the same sense as my this mosque (of Medina) is the last mosque". If the words مسجدی هذا آخر المساجد that "this my mosque is the last mosque" do not mean that there shall not be built in the world another mosque in future and these words only mean that there shall be no mosque in place of mine and that no mosque shall henceforth be built except as a copy of my mosque and after it and shall reflect it, for, my law is

everlasting and there is no law after it. انی آخرالانبیاء similarly therefore, means that "there is no prophet after me claiming to have received grace independently of me. Only my followers and disciples radiating my light shall be eligible to this favour". How admirably eloquent are these words and how penetrating is the glance of our Holy Prophet that he so clearly foresaw the possibility of erroneous interpretation that lay in the words انی آخرالانبیاء and at once disposed of it by the words "I am the last prophet" in the same sense as "my this mosque is the last mosque".

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Dear friends ! May God open your eyes. Should you care to reflect and ponder that when in spite of lacs and crores of mosques have been built in Muslim countries after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) the sense of the tradition "My this mosque is the last mosque" remains intact and breach - proof, then how the grant of prophethood to one who appears as his disciple and servant and gathers the fruits of Divine favour in his servitude and as his tributory and reflection, can be said to repudiate the sense of the tradition 'انی آخرالانبیاء'. Believe it or not, the unvarnished truth is this : our Master the Holy Prophet is, to all intents and purposes, the last, for every category of prophethood, (law-bearing prophethood, independent prophethood) continuation of which could militate against his status of finality, has terminated. And instead the door of prophethood that remains open admits of only subordinate Prophethood which hardly detracts from his office of finality. Would that the other Muslims but grasped this point.

Besides the word آخر 'last' as an adjective, conveys in Arabic language, the sense of perfection of a person, in an accomplishment, to the last degree. Examples of this are to be found in abundance in both Arabic and Persian. Since this discussion has already grown in volume, we do not want to go into it at any length. It will suffice here to quote an example from the Urdu peoms of Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal, in the hope that our readers, bulk of whom are expected to be fond of Dr. Iqbal's poetry and philosophy, shall feel enlightened.

Says the learned Doctor :

چل بسا داغ آہ ! میت اس کی زیب دوش ہے
آخری شاعر جہاں آباد کا خاموش ہے

Evidently the expression 'آخری شاعر' 'last poet' is not used here in the literal sense : for poets continued to appear after Dagh and shall go on appearing in future. Besides, our literary circles regard Doctor Iqbal himself as by far a greater poet than Dagh. What Dr. Iqbal meant however was that Dagh was at the height of eminence as a classical poet. Similarly 'انی آخرالانبیاء' will mean our Holy Prophet was at the height of eminence in the excellencies of prophethood; and that meaning is, in itself, a very correct and a happy one indeed.

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The third tradition that our opponents put forward is :

لو کان بعدی نبی لکان عمر

"Had there been a prophet after me it would have been Omar".

From this tradition the evidence adduced is there can be no prophet after the Holy prophet since he said that, had there been one it would have been Omar and since Omar was not a prophet therefore the door of Prophethood is closed after the Holy Prophet ( May Peace of Allah be on him ). On serious reflection it would appear that this conclusion is far from the correct one, after the careful examination and close investigation. Our readers will recall that while explaining the tradition' لا نبی بعدی ' we had explained that the word 'بعد' (after) as 'ظرف مکانی' means preference of one thing to another, as says the Quran "And then what story will they believe besides (بعد) Allah and his verses"? The use of word 'بعد' (after) in Arabic in this particular sense is too common and well-recognized to leave any ground for debate. In truth no further argument is called for after the conclusive evidence of the Holy Quran. This tradition" لو کان بعدی نبی لکان عمر" that "had there been a prophet after me it would be Omar" means therefore that "If I had not been made prophet Omar would have been in my place". This is surely the correct and true interpretation. As a corroborative evidence we may again refer to another statement of the Holy Prophet who, as was his wont, used to dispel doubts likely

to be created in respect of one tradition by the citing of another. In another context the Holy Prophet made the same statement :

"لو لم أبعث فيكم لبعث عمر"

"Had I not been raised among you, Omar would have been instead".

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Read together, the two traditions present a clear picture. The Holy Prophet (May peace of Allah be on him) has furnished a clarification in effect, in these words: "that when I said that had there been a prophet after me, it would have been Omar, I meant that if there had been a prophet someone other than me, it would have been Omar".

The Holy Prophet's foregoing words embody great truths. On the one hand he was himself a law-giving Prophet who had brought a new Divine code. On the other hand we have the evidence of history and tradition that Hazrat Omar was gifted with a singularly judicious mind. Not only his whole term of caliphate but his life during the period of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him) furnish ample evidence of the fact that Hazrat Omar was a legislator of great eminence. According to the evidence of traditions, it so happened on many occasions that Omar offered one opinion in a matter of importance and the other companions offered another view, the word of God subsequently coincided with Omar's view (see Bokhari, Muslim, Zarqani). When the Holy Prophet (Allah Bless him) said that if there had been a prophet other than himself it would have been Omar, he was merely pointing out this distinguishing merit of Hazrat Omar and he meant that since the times called for a new law and if he had not been raised, Omar would have been appointed. Hazrat Omar possessed such a highly-developed sense of judiciousness as to compel the admiration of several noted European historians. Not only therefore the Holy Prophet's tradition means "Had I not been raised, Omar would have been", even Hazrat Omar's own life point to the fact that the Holy Prophet's statement under reference, of a certainty emphasized this distinguishing feature of Hazrat Omar who stood head and shoulders above the other companions in this field.

What lends further support to our stand is the fact that in general terms Hazrat Abu Bakr was considered to be, by concensus of opinion, as the most eminent companion. Even the words of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) confirm the view that Hazrat Abu Bakr was the top most companion. A tradition has already been quoted in this connection which embodies the Holy Prophet's (Allah bless him) statement : "Abu Bakr holds the highest rank in my followers except if there be a prophet later on". Notwithstanding this when the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) leaves Abu Bakr out when he says that "Had there been a prophet instead of him, it would have been Omar", it clearly constitutes decisively conclusive evidence of the fact that the object here was an emphasis on a particular trait of Hazrat Omar in which specifically he exceeded even Adu Bakr and it was no other qualification than his legal-mindedness. He had furnished ample evidence of this during the life of the Holy Prophet and during the term of his Caliphate this particular ability manifested itself with still greater prominence. Viewed from any angle, the tradition under discussion is capable of only one construction that the word 'بعد' (after) has not been used here in term of period and it means that if there were to be a prophet other than the Holy Prophet it would have been Omar, for, he had in him the spirit of a law-maker.

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Briefly speaking, the tradition does not relate to the question of appointment in terms of time but in terms of replacement of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him). There is fourfold conclusive evidence which supports this construction :

(1) The word 'بعد' (after) is very commonly used in Arabic in the sense of 'instead' and here the word 'بعد' carries this meaning, "If there had been another Prophet instead of me it would have been Omar".

(2) Another tradition of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) furnishes the same explanation. It clearly says "Had I not been appointed Omar would have been, instead".

(3) Hazrat Omar's own life shows that he was an eminently

gifted law-maker. And since our Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) was a law-giving Prophat, in the tradition under reference he merely pointed out that the time called for a Divine Law and that "if I had not been appointed Omar would have been".

(4) According to the consensus of opinion as well as the statement of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) Hazrat Abu Bakr held the position of eminence in the holy order of companions. If there had been a question of absolute prophethood then surely Hazrat Abu Bakr deserved the honour and not Hazrat Omar. This further confirms the view that in this tradition an emphasis has been laid on the legal acumen of Hazrat Omar who excelled Hazrat Abu Bakr in this particular field.

Since this discussion has become fairly lengthy I will now confine myself to brief references in my treatment of other traditions. I however hope that the foregoing discussion in terms of principles must satisfy (if God willing) a balanced and honest mind. This discussion of a general nature can help to solve all the traditions, that are cited by our opponents in this behalf. Undoubtedly the foregoing exposition of the Quranic verses and traditions of the Holy Prophet has furnished a master key which can be applied, by the Grace of God, to open any lock that we may have to come across in this field. I propose therefore to confine myself to brief points and cover the rest of this subject in a few pages.

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It must be noted in this connection that the further tradition which our opponents bring forth is worded as below:

ان الرسالة و النبوة قد انقطعت فلا رسول بعدی و لا نبی

"Prophethood and apostleship are closed henceforth and there shall neither be an apostle nor a prophet after me". It is argued on the basis of this tradition that the Holy Prophet has declared the door of prophethood closed and said that "there is no prophet after me". But every sensible person can comprehend that this tradition bears no new point and reiterates, only the points enumerated in the different preceding traditions. The explanation given in respect of the traditions انی آخر الانبیاء and لانبی بعدی equally befittingly applies to this tradition and therefore no new point seems to have been made for any further scrutiny.

In fact the words الرسالة and النبوة used in this tradition with the emphasis on the letters الف ل, the law-bearing Prophethood peculiar to the Holy Prophet has been specifically particularized and not prophethood in general as borne out by the exposition made by Allama Ibne Hajar, the Pre-eminent authority on traditions (see Fathalbari vol 12 page 305) : The closing words of this tradition' فلا رسول بعدی و لانبی point out, as an added factor, to the similairty of diction in the early tradition about لا نبی بعدی. In any case there has been raised in this tradition no issue in addition to the points covered by the preceding traditions. The points that it raises are the same as have been raised in the traditions لانبی بعدی and انی آخرالانبیاء namely that in the appearance of the Holy Prophet the door of law-bearing and of independent prophethood has been closed and not that of reflex-prophethood which is but a part of the Holy Prophet's prophethood and its reflection and not something extraneous to it.

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This is the self-same construction which all the eminent divines and reformers of Islam have been advocating. Hazrat Shaikhi Akbar Muhayyuddin Ibne Arabi (died in A.H. 638) says : "The Prophethood that terminated with the person of the Prophet of Allah (peace be on him and His blessings) was no other than the law-bearing prophethood since there is no more an occasion for it and this is the meaning of his words 'verily Apostleship and Prophethood ceased with me therefore there shall be after me neither an apostle nor a prophet' i.e. there shall not be after me a prophet with a law other than mine, but that he shall be subject to my law." (Futuhate-Makkiya vol 2 p. 73). How clear and explicit is the above-quoted reference which dates as far back as 700 years. It is the opinion of a high-placed authority co nmanding as much respect as an Imam. Should doubts of the kind referred to in respect of the opinion of Hazrat Mulla Ali Qari and Hazrat Imam Shirani quoted in a foregoing chapter, arise in the mind of our reader, he is directed to consult my note dealing with such objections academically, in respect of the traditions, لو عاش ابراهیم لکان صدیقا نبیاً

and لانبی بعدی. Should any doubts still persist, I should leave such cases to the pleasure of God as He guides whomsoever He pleases.

Now I will take up the tradition in respect of the Holy Prophet's statement : "I and the Prophets preceding me may be compared to a house a man built with symmetry in every proportion and decorated it artistically but left a gap in a corner for one stone. People went around the house and asked in wonderment why this one stone had not been placed. I say I am the self-same stone and I am the Seal of Prophets".

On the basis of this tradition our opponents contend that in the edifice of prophethood one stone had been left out and the advent of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him) has filled the gap. Now, therefore, there is no more room for any one else. What a pity that our misguided brethren, in their zeal to oppose, little mind the sublime position of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and in putting a wrong construction on this tradition only detract from his dignity. The tradition under reference does not, in point of fact, illustrate the position of the Holy Prophet's apostleship; it merely points to the perfection of Law. The tradition simply means that many law-giving prophets appeared and every new law was one more brick added towards the construction of the edifice of prophethood till the appearance of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him) marked the emplacement of the last brick, thus completing the Mansion of law and that the Islamic law thus comprised all the preceding fundamental truths in addition to new basic values, thereby perfecting a universal and eternal House of canons.

This tradition clearly underlines the complementary role of the Holy Prophet and is not relevant to other aspects of the question of Prophethood. The Ulema of early times have taken a similar view of this tradition. Allama Ibne Hajar (died in A. H. 852), the author of Sharha Fathulbari, who is considered to be a leading light in traditions, says, in his comments on this tradition: "It means that the Law of Muhammad is most perfect

as compared to preceding laws which were perfect in themselves". (Sharha Fathulbari Vol. Vl page 261).

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It is only fair that this tradition should be confined in its implications to the perfection of Law. If, however, it is stretched to a comparison on a personal level, then it is definitely derogatory to the Holy Prophet (May Allah bless him) reducing him in rank to a mere brick in the entire edifice of Prophethood. Says the Prophet "I was Prophet when Adam was yet (in the transitional stages) between water and mud". The tradition under reference is, in fact, a subtle expression of the Divine scheme that the preceding prophets came to pave way for the perfect prophethood of the Holy Prophet as he was the Central figure in the scheme of apostleship and the Divine law had to receive its perfect shape through him. To say of him who holds such a position of eminence, singular sublimity and who has been honoured as chief among men and has been graced with the Divine favour "Hadst thou not been there would not have been created the heavens" that he is but one brick in the vast edifice of Prophethood, is a very rotten and far from acceptable interpretation of the tradition under discussion. The truth of the matter is that the tradition confines itself only to the perfection of Law and to nothing besides it.

Borrowing a current phrase from political terminology, the tradition describes every prophet as representing a single unit and thus if all law—giving Prophets represent a unit each, the Holy Prophet in his august person, is as a unit, the stone that was affixed in the fullness of time, in its proper place, thus completing the mansion of Law for all times. The words "why has not the corner-stone been yet affixed" ? represents in a beautiful way, a question and a thirst that human nature was feeling—the time had come for an everlasting and global law so as to perfect the edifice of values. Had it been a matter of prophethood in the absolute sense, this reference to a natural want and a natural thirst was uncalled for. This is unquestionable therefore that the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) has been compared here to a unit among the other law-giver prophets and as is well-known, as units all unit-members have equal figure value whether big

or small. This example further makes it clear that as units only law-giver and independent Prophets are to be taken into account as the subordinate and reflex-prophet is but like a branch and not an independent tree and therefore out of the question. Moreover our Lord the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) has by adding the words 'خاتم النبیین' at the end, has disposed of the entire controversy. He has warned the Muslims against construing this tradition in a sense contrary to the spirit of the Quranic term 'خاتم النبیین'. In a manner of speaking the Holy Prophet has said that "compared to preceding prophets I am no doubt the last brick in the mansion of law but in the future scheme as 'خاتم النبیین' I am the foundation-stone and hence-forward my currency and my seal are the legal tender and right label".

In recapitulation, it appears from this significant wording of the tradition that the reference is not to the prophethood of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) but to his law-giving role as a unit. The object is to emphasize the fact that human nature under pressure of existing environments called for an eternal and global law and the Holy Prophet's message satisfied this natural demand for all times. This is the only explanation that befits the high rank of the Holy prophet (Allah bless him) and is also in consonance with the loftiness of the Quranic code. Any other explanation would only tend to reduce the Prophet to a mere brick in the entire mansion.

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Now I come to the last tradition in the category of negative reports, which in fact contain nothing contrary to our belief but has been made a weapon of ridicule and derision in the hands of the ill-advised. "Tnere will shortly rise from among my followers thirty impostors (in one tradition "thirty dajjals") each claiming to be prophet but I am the Seal of Prophets and there is none after me". Our opponent Maulvis argue on the strength of this tradition that every claimant to prophethood after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) is a Dajjal (anti-Chirst) and impostor and by applying this tradition to the Promised Messiah, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya

Movement they make him the target of their ridicule and abuse. But as will be presently evident, thier objections originate in ignorance, and are born of hastiness and lack of insight. This tradition is in point of fact totally irrelevant to the claims of the Promised Messiah.

It must be borne in mind, in the first instance, in this connection, that, as the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) has by suffixing the expression انا خاتم الانبياء clearly pointed out that this warning relates to only such claimants to Prophethood as annul the Muhammadan Law and cut through the term of the Muhammadan dispensation and claim to have brought a new Law and a new religion. This tradition is clearly in no way applicable to the case of the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

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Another point that must be noted is that in this tradition the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) confines himself to the statement that there will appear thirty impostors and liars who will claim to be prophets, he did not say that whoever claimed to be a prophet must be an impostor and a liar. There is a world of difference in these two assertions and no sensible person will declare these to be as synonymous. When the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) said that there shall rise among his followers thirty impostors and liars who will claim to be prophets, could he not in one brief sentence warn that whosover from among his followers claimed to be prophet shall be an impostor and anti Christ. It is a great pity indeed that visions have become so blurred that a simple and plain statement is being so unjustly twisted and misconstrued. The Holy prophet declares simply this "There shall appear thirty false prophets from among my followers". But these words are being so guilded as to represent the statement that "whosoever claims to be a prophet shall be a liar and an impostor". This is a most brazen-faced distortion of a very clearly-worded tradition. One can only compare such people to the thief who makes bold to commit burglary holding candle in one hand.

The figure thirty mentioned in this tradition is itself an evidence of the intention to delimit the number of impostors to a specific figure and not to extend it to every claimant. A little reflection will show that this specific figure in reality contains a covert warning against rejecting all and sundry who might also include the genuine claimants. Brethren, reflect a little; if the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) had meant that every claimant shall be a liar, he would have certainly not limited their number to thirty but would have clearly declared that whosoever claimed to be a prophet after him shall be an impostor. He did not say so and on the contrary limited the number of impostors to thirty. It embodies a clear hint that there will be true claimants apart from these impostors. This is exactly the position which has been explained in the tradition quoted by us from Sunani Abu Daud in the foregoing pages. This tradition consists of the following statement of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), "There is no prophet in between me and him (the Promised Messiah) and he shall undoubtedly appear".

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The above tradition throws an illuminating flood of light on the inner content-matter of the tradition relating to thirty impostors and expounds the fact that while undoubtedly, there will rise thirty impostors among the Prophet's followers, there will all the same, appear a true Prophet and he will be the Messiah of the latter days. In other words, these two traditions, read together, reveal that, before the advent of the Promised Messiah, false prophets will arise, but their case will be settled eventually and the advent of the true claimant shall be heralded forth. According to historical evidence, the number of impostors had decidedly reached the given figure of thirty, long before the appearance of the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. Allama Qastalani says in his famous book Mowahibil laddunnia (Vol : 2, Page 148) "Qazi Ayaz says that the truth of this tradition has become manifest. A count of the known false prophets from the time of the Holy prophet (Allah bless him) to our day will show that the given number has heen reached

and a student of history will recognize the truth of this statement''. Similar evidence will be found in other works, like Ikmalulikmal, Sharhi Muslim and Hujjujul kiramah edited by Nawab Siddiq Hasan khan, Chief of the Ahlihadis. When, in spite of repeated remonstrances, the Maulvies persisted in dubbing him as one of the impostors predicted to appear by the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), the Promised Messiah felt impelled by a righteous sense of conviction, and said in the glory of his faith :

"Some half learned persons, deriding at me point out that our Holy Prophet (May blessings of Allah be on him) has predicted the advent of thirty impostors who will all claim to be prophets. O ye ignorant unfortunates ! Were thirty impostors only to be destined for you and no true reformer was ordained ? A quarter of the 14th century has well-nigh passed, and the moon of Caliphate has covered the fourteen stages of its perfection, as hints the verse والقمر قدرنه المنازل (and we have fixed stages for the moon) and the cycle of the world is nearing the end, but your impostors do not end. Perhaps they will stick to you till your demise. O ye ill-informed ! the impostor who is termed Satan resides within you and so you know not the times and see not the signs of heaven. But I blame you not for that one, who came like me in the 14th century after Moses, was called "Impostor" by the impious Jews. Hearts have certainly become alike. Have Mercy O Lord !". (Review Mobahasa Batalvi and Chakralvi p. 7). What pathos and sincerity underlies these utterances. The long-suppressed feelings of pain over the misfortune of his people have suddenly burst forth. It is a pity indeed that those who made light of his weighty claims did not turn sober. Those who had rejected did not turn believers. Those who slumbered stirred not out of their sleep and the bark of the nation, floundered, from one whirlpool to another.

Briefly speaking, the tradition relating to thirty impostors predicts the appearance of thirty false claimants and does not preclude the advent of a true CLAIMANT. We have already shown that the number of impostors did reach the said limit

of thirty in the course of time and also a true reformer made his advent in fulfillment of the other prophecy of our Lord the Holy Prophet (May Allah bless him) namely, "there is no prophet between him and me and verily he will appear". If still our brethren are expecting more impostors from among their people, then we only content ourselves with repeating what the Promised Messiah has said :

"Today my people recognize not my station
A day will come when they will grieve for having missed my happy time."

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By the grace of God and through His merciful help, I have dealt with the traditions, having a bearing on the Question of Prophethood. It is a happy coincidence that of these traditions six were of a positive category and six of a negative category. The foregoing review of these traditions is by the grace of God, convincing enough to any fair-minded person. During the course of this discussion a body of principles has emerged which can serve as guides in the elucidation of other traditions that relate to the subject, dealt with in the traditions under reference. Such traditions have not been included in this discussion separately owing to considerations of space. The guidance of the Quran which transcends every other evidence is an added factor. But only a clear mind, gifted with the light of truth-seeking search, can avail of the light of Quran and Hadis, for, the light of the sun is of little use to the blind in the eye. Before I resume the thread, I will request my readers once more to deliberate the arguments of the Quran and the Hadis, with a God-fearing sense of piety and, as seekers of truth, whether such truth be against or in conformity to their existing beliefs. The Question of faith, it must be realized, is an issue of the highest delicacy ; a little lapse is liable to render one an object of God's displeasure. Dear Brethren ! take not into account your existing belief, nor what you heard from your forefathers, nor what your Maulvies say. On the contrary attend to what the Quran enjoins, what the Hadis commands and what your own inner light certifies. As for our inner feelings are concerned, Heaven knows, we are consumed with a burning desire

to sincerely serve, in love and faith, the truth of God. We proclaim with our Imam :

"We have naught of ill-will ye brethren
This is but a humble advice
Whoever is pure of heart
We are devoted to serve him
Heart and soul."

*(To be Continued)*

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# God in the Holy Quran

*Mirza Rafi Ahmad*
*English : M. G. Ahmad*

The God that the Holy Quran portrays for us, aud calls us to believe in, is a Living and life-giving, Eternal, Everlasting God. The road to salvation, to everlasting peace and spiritual bliss and to eternal life, according to the Holy Quran, lies in clinging to the hem of His garment, in bowing down before Him, in all humility and lowliness, with feelings of deep, intense, and fervent love, and in establishing with Him a close relationship of sincerity and obedience. The Holy Book requires us to become admirers and ardent lovers of His Noble Face, of His unsurpassable beauty and limitless bounty. He is not a product of our imagination only, or a mere creation of our intellect, having no external existence. The signs of His existence can be felt and experienced.

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He has always existed, and He shall exist for ever. His being is above creation and immune from all change and alteration.

He is without a son, without a father. No one is His equal. No one is like Him, and none shares in His person, or attributes. All virtue belongs to Him; and He alone is worthy of all and eternal praise. He is the Source of all blessings, and the Spring of all goodness. All excellence and belovedness, glory and majesty, honour and greatness, splendour and augustness belong to Him alone. He is the Source of all beauty; the Creator, the Master, the Originator of all creation. He is the life of all life. He is All-Glorious and All-Holy, free from all blemishes, above all weaknesses and frailties. He is the Quintessence of all excellence, the Possessor of all good qualities. He is the Origin of all, and all return to Him. Nothing can move without His permission. He is the King of Kings, Supreme Lord of Sovereignty, Master of the angels, Ruler of the heavens and the earth. Nothing can happen on earth unless He permits it in the heavens. He, in His wisdom, has created

infinite causes and innumerable conditions. No cause is effective without His command: the effectiveness, or non-effectiveness, of every cause is under His control. He alone gives life, and He alone causes death. He controls all, sustains all. He is the One, the Unique, the Besought of all. All things depend on Him for life and existence, while He is Independent of all.

He is All-knowing ; no mobility or immobility in the heavens, or in earth, is beyond His knowledge. Each particle in the Universe is numbered by Him. He knows everything that enters the earth, or comes out of it. He is the All-Aware, the Omniscient, the All-Seeing. He knows all, is cognizant of all. His perception reaches out to the very depths of the human heart. Nothing is hidden from Him; there is no secret that He does not know. He is the Most Gracious, the Most Loving, the Most Compassionate and the Greatest Forgiver. He rejects none who bows down before Him. He pardons the sins, the evildoings and transgressions of a life time, in a moment of true repentance and snicere contrition. He is the Most Forbearing, the Most Forgiving and the Greatest Coverer of faults. He is never hasty in punishment. He is the Most Affectionate, the Most Loving, and never tires of giving. There are no limits to His favours and benefactions, to His generosity and munificence. He is the Most Faithful, the Most Trustworthy. He is true to His words, and keeps His promises. Those who cling to Him, they never perish. He is the Hearer of prayers, the Accepter of supplications. All excellence and perfection, all beauty and loveliness, all grace and elegance, all sublimity and magnificence, reside in Him alone. He is the First and the Last. He alone is the Manifest; all else is but His manifestation. The beauty of everything beautiful partakes of His beauty. The grace of the graceful is a reflection of His gracefulness, that imparts to it an elegance and a charm, irrespective of the fact whether it is the sun, the moon, the stars, or the fragrance, colour and freshness of flowers, or the beautiful countenance of the humans, or their forms. He is the Hidden and the Immanent. He is the Knower of the nature of all things, but His own nature is known to none. "If His Divine beauty and sublimity finds physical expression, every heart will be irress-

istibly drawn towards Him, as a moth is drawn towards the candle. But He hides His beauty from aliens, and unveils it to those only who seek Him in truth and sincertiy."

Such, indeed is the God of Islam——a Living and life-giving God, Who gives the testimony of His existence through His Omnipotence, and His wondrous deeds; He listens to the supplications of His servants and answers them; sends down on them His sweet, soft and captivating word; and blesses them with faith, conviction, and peace, saying, "Indeed I am".

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Life is an attribute essentially His; it is not found in anyone else, except when He Himself gives it. He possesses all attributes of life; He knows, feels and wills; He sees, hears and speaks; He accepts prayers and shows miraculous signs; He sustains, supports, protects and gives life to all creation. In every age, He gives proofs of His life, through His righteous servants who follow His book——the Holy Quran, and His Prophet——The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) that the blind may see that He exists, and the faithless may believe He is Almighty, and Great, and does what He pleases. None can resist His decision, and no one can interdict His will. The Lord God, of whom the Holy Quran says:

> "All praise and glorification belong to Allah, and He alone is worthy of all praise. He is the Possessor of all perfect attributes. He is free from all infirmities, frailties, and faults. His blessings encompass all creation; and they are the cause of its survival".

The first kind of His blessings, which is also the widest, is that of sustenance and support of all the universes. Every universe, whether of the matter, or of the spirit, is His creation; and it needs His succour every moment.

The second kind of His blessings is that of Graciousness. It is exclusive for the animate beings. This divine atribute comes into operation when God grants to them the means, the materials, and the capacities, required for their moral, spiritual and material progress.

The third kind of blessings is that of Benificence. This is exclusively for the humans, displayed when they make use of the powers that God has given them. He blesses them with abundance, and helps them to grow and prosper.

The fourth kind of His blessings is that of 'Mastership of the Day of Judgement'. It is meant only for those of His chosen servants who surrender their all to Him, and become exclusively His. He grants them miraculous qualities; and in recognition of their faith showers on them His choicest presents of paradise in this very life. For them He sets no limits to His bounty. He manifests His attribute of Lordship for their sake and favours them with untold blessings; He covers them with limitless bounties; and a stream of His perennial favours gushes forth for them.

This, indeed, is the God of the faithfuls. He appoints them as His chosen representatives and vice-gerents in this world, and covers them with the robe of His Commendation; He makes them mirrors, to reflect His attributes. It is then that the Living God appears through those who die for Him, and His kingdom is established on the earth. The status of the faithfuls, for whom this attribute is expressed, is so exalted that because of their deep love for Allah, they attain to self-extinction, and perish before their Lord's majesty and glory; owing to their constancy, they immerse themselves in the ocean of His unity, and attain communion with Him; they glory in the spectable of his Beauty. They see God, not only themselves, but also make others see Him in all His greatness. By absorbing Divine attributes into their persons, they guide others to Him.

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Our God is Incomprehensible, hidden in veils, far beyond the beyond. The physical eye cannot see Him. Yet He shows Himself; by His mighty works. He unveils His Face to His creation. It is through such manifestations of His Omnipotence that He proves He is Ever-Living.

The Promised Messiah says:

"Hearken Ye people!
The God who is living,
Is not the God

Who does not always exercise
The attribute of All-powerfulness,
And Omnipotence!

The Lord God furnishes
Proof of His own existence,
Through wonderous deeds,
And manifestations,
Of His boundless might:
Of that Invisible Being,
Without a tangible trace,
This is the manner and style,
When He deigns to show
His face!

In regard
To whatsoever an affair,
Or thing, He might come to say
He would encompass it,
He would bring it about,
It can never be
Put off——cancelled,
Or postponed: in this
Inevitability of whatsoever
He might desire, lies
The proof of Divinity,
And His limitless Powers![1]

Today Islam alone has the distinction to present not only theoretically a self-consistent picture of the Living God, but practically, too, provides incontrovertible evidence of His infinite grace and grandeur, of His Omnipotence and of His existence. It is a picture which is a powerful and a conclusive evidence of His perfection and flawlessness, as a consequence of which every righteous soul, crying: "Thee alone we serve, and Thine succour alone we seek", sinks at His feet in ecstasy and rapture.

(1) *Eng. Sufi A. Q. Niaz vide Psalms of Ahmad p. 112, published by the Review of Religions, Rabwah, West Pakistan: 1964.*

Since, the appearance of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Sun of Truth, Islam has never witnessed a moment when there did not exist, in its ranks, persons of such exalted spiritual order, who guide others along the path of Almighty Allah, bearing witness to the Person and attributes of God. Not only do they, themselves, behold God as a reward of their perfect faith, but also show to the world the amazing miracle of the glories of a Living God, and silence the enemies of truth, through the signs, miracles and Divine favours, which descend on them from Allah.

"The distinction,
And the pride of Islam,
Lie in nothing
Except this, that it unveils
The Beauteous Face of God
The Perfect, the Supreme!"

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# HEAVENLY LIGHT

*Bashir Ahmad Orchard*

The spiritual efficacy of Islam is such a transforming and illuminating power that there is no faith in the world today which can compete with it in demonstrating the attributes of God among its adherents.

From time immemorial God has communed with His chosen servants through the medium of verbal revelation; and while there are different categories of inspiration, verbal revelation is the most exalted of them all. The scriptures of various religions record numerous dialogues—short and long—between God and man; but since the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) the followers of religions other than Islam are no longer favoured with this divine blessing except, perhaps, once in a while. In all ages there have been pious Muslims who have enjoyed the experience of verbal revelation; and this age is no exception. God constantly communed with Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad—the Promised Messiah and Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement—and thousands of sincere Ahmadies who have sworn allegiance to him have experienced revelation to a greater or lesser degree.

The fruits of Islam are of the purest and sweetest quality; but they cannot be tasted and enjoyed without dedicated devotion which necessitates the cultivation of a genuine and deep love for God and His Holy Prophet. Love is the fulcrum of sacrifice. The lover will leave no stone unturned in order to please his beloved. Love for God must reign in the heart of a believer before he can expect to become infused with heavenly light and be granted communion with his Maker. Nevetheless God is so Gracious and Merciful that sometimes He bestows His special favours even upon those who consider themselves inadequately deserving of them. The great question is how can love for God be cultivated? This is a subject on its own but suffice it to say in a nutshell that

love for God can be developed by regularly praying for the soul of the Holy Prophet and for the souls of the saints of Islam. Obedience to the laws of God is also, of course, an essential requisite. As love between husband and wife may be developed stronger and stronger after marriage through devoted attention and loyalty so does the light of love for God brighten in the heart of man if he strives to win His pleasure.

Islam is replete in perfection, being the final and universal religion for mankind ; and those who surrender themselves to His will and cultivate the spirit of righteousness are afforded access to divine experiences and secrets which are unattainable through the medium of any other faith. Islam has the capacity of lifting man from the lowest strata of degradation to the pinnacle of purity and holiness. Man may become transformed from a coarse and ugly creature into a refined beautiful character effulgent with heavenly light. God envelops him with His mantle of Grace and Succour and grants him immeasurable knowledge and wisdom although his secular education may have been negligible and his acumen dull. He finds himself living in a world far removed from his former environment and is conscious of a flood of divine light and understanding. The luscious fruits of Islam are within the reach of everybody but there are few who care to raise their arm to pluck it due either to religious apathy or spiritual blindness.

The Holy Quran is the key to eternal bliss; but its divine commandments can only help the believer to the extent in which he puts them into practice. No man enters heaven by wishing himself to be there. He must travel the straight and narrow path of self-improvement and reap reward in proportion to progress achieved. The earnest devotee of Islam finds heavenly tranquility even in this world and looks forward with eager anticipation to the greater joys awaiting him in the life to come. He experiences the joys of two paradises—one in this life and one in the Hereafter and so becomes a liv ng testimony of the truth of the Holy Quran in which God says:

> "But for him who fears to stand before his Lord there are two Gardens. "(55 : 47)

"We are your friends in this life and in the Hereafter." (41 : 32)

"And for them (true Muslims) are glad tidings in the present life and also in the Hereafter." (10 : 65)

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No doubt every revealed religion has the capacity of effecting a good influence to some degree upon the lives of those who endeavour to adhere to its fundamental princples even though it may have lost its pristine purity due to interpolation and mis-interpretation during the passage of time. All faiths have in common some basic teachings such as honesty, truthfulness, charity etc. which reflect their salutary influence upon the characters of those who practise them. Every religion has the power to change a man for the better; but just as some medicines are more efficacious than others so are some religions more uplifting than others; and of them all Islam is the most powerful spiritual force in the world today.

Muslims who consecrate their lives in the service of God and give minute attention to all points of faith are so brightened with heavenly light that it visibly shines forth from their faces. Divine experience and spiritual knowledge are bestowed upon them by God and they become living signs of existence as the shining plants in the depth of space indicate the hidden presence of the sun. An essential requisite for attaining this blessing is an understanding of the correct interpretation of basic Islamic truths otherwise the door of divine communion is never opened wide. A man may believe in God and live a comparatively good and noble life but his demeanour and countenance will never reflect divine light in a marked degree unless he is tuned in on the proper spiritual wave lengths. One hundred thousand models of a beautful radio may find their way into an equal number of homes; but unless the purchasers know how to operate them they will not serve the desired purpose ; and even if some persons know how to turn the knobs they cannot pick up the desired station unless they find the right point of contact. Even if they tune to a point just a fraction off the mark they fail to pick up the station; or they may catch it

only very faintly. Similarly Muslims have the Holy Quran and books of authentic traditions but as long as they oppose or even deviate a little from the correct interpretation and practice of Islam they are liable to deprive themselves of Divine communion and heavenly blessings. It is because the majority of Muslims have lost the true meaning and spirit of Islam that God has sent the Promised Messiah and Mahdi in this age to restore the love of God and purity of faith in the hearts of mankind. He removed all misinterpretations and misconceptions about Islam and rekindled the fire of devotion in the hearts of men; and those who render whole—hearted allegiance to him are the ones on whom the light of heaven shines and who frequently enjoy communion with God in the same manner as it was enjoyed by the chosen servants of God in the past.

All Praise Is Due To ALLAH The Lord Of The Worlds.

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